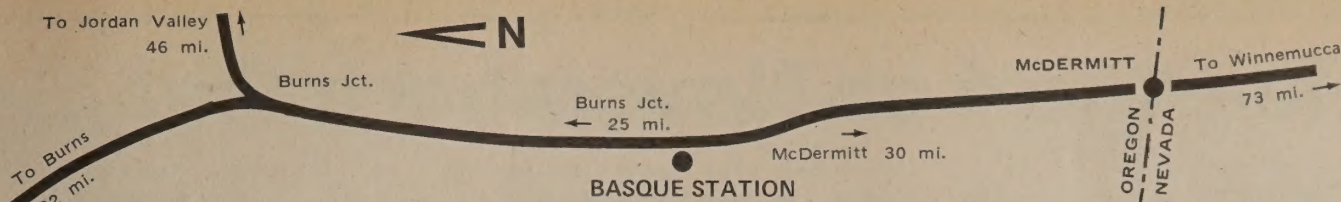


Basque Station

'There's no other place like it!'

by Dave Davis
Managing Editor

BASQUE STATION--Cowboy songs and Zane Grey novels about the Old West come to life in the high



desert country of southeastern Oregon.

Long-forgotten lines about the lone prairie and riding the dusty trail jump from imagery to reality amid the sagebrush and broiling summer sun.

Like a modern-day version of a stagecoach relay station, the Basque Maintenance Station stands along US95. It serves as headquarters and home for the five-man

crew that tends to a section of the Idaho-Oregon-Nevada Highway and ORE78 on which pistol-packing cowboys on horseback are as familiar a sight as motor vehicles.

The station is the Highway Division's most remote maintenance facility, a distinction borne proudly by Section Foreman Virgil Lewis.

"It takes a special kind of person to work here," he says, "but there's no other place I'd rather

be."

"It's quiet here," Lewis says, "and I like that. I worked in Roseburg and in Burns, but I got tired of all the traffic. We don't have that problem here."

Lewis has been at the station for three years. "I was promoted in as assistant foreman," says the 14-year Highway Division veteran. "When the foreman retired, I was (See BASQUE STATION, page 5)



NEWS

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

VOL. 5, NO. 9

104 STATE TRANSPORTATION BUILDING, SALEM 97310

SEPTEMBER 1980

Weighmaster funds shifted to OSP

Highway Division weighmasters will be sharing their scale houses with state troopers following approval of the transfer of \$1.5 million in Highway Funds to the Oregon State Police.

Assistant State Highway Engineer Larry Rulien said the troopers will take on duties as weighmasters, conducting weight, size and regulatory inspections of trucks. They will also check Public Utilities Commissioner permits and licenses.

"These aren't additional funds," Rulien said of the transfer. "The money was already in the budgets of the weighmasters and PUC. It looked like weighmasters would underspend its budget by \$500,000, and PUC, which is on a rather austere program, would underspend by about the same amount."

Reinforcement, not replacement

Rulien added that the transfer would not mean that troopers would replace weighmasters. "This will mean that we'll have more peo-

ple available. Scale houses will be able to stay open longer and operate additional days. It might even free our people to go out with portable scales," he said.

"OSP," he added, "was to the place where if it cut any more, it would have had to lay off a large

number of troopers. Our thought was that here was a chance to beef up weight control, generate a little more revenue through tighter control of PUC licensing and permits, and still stay within our budget."

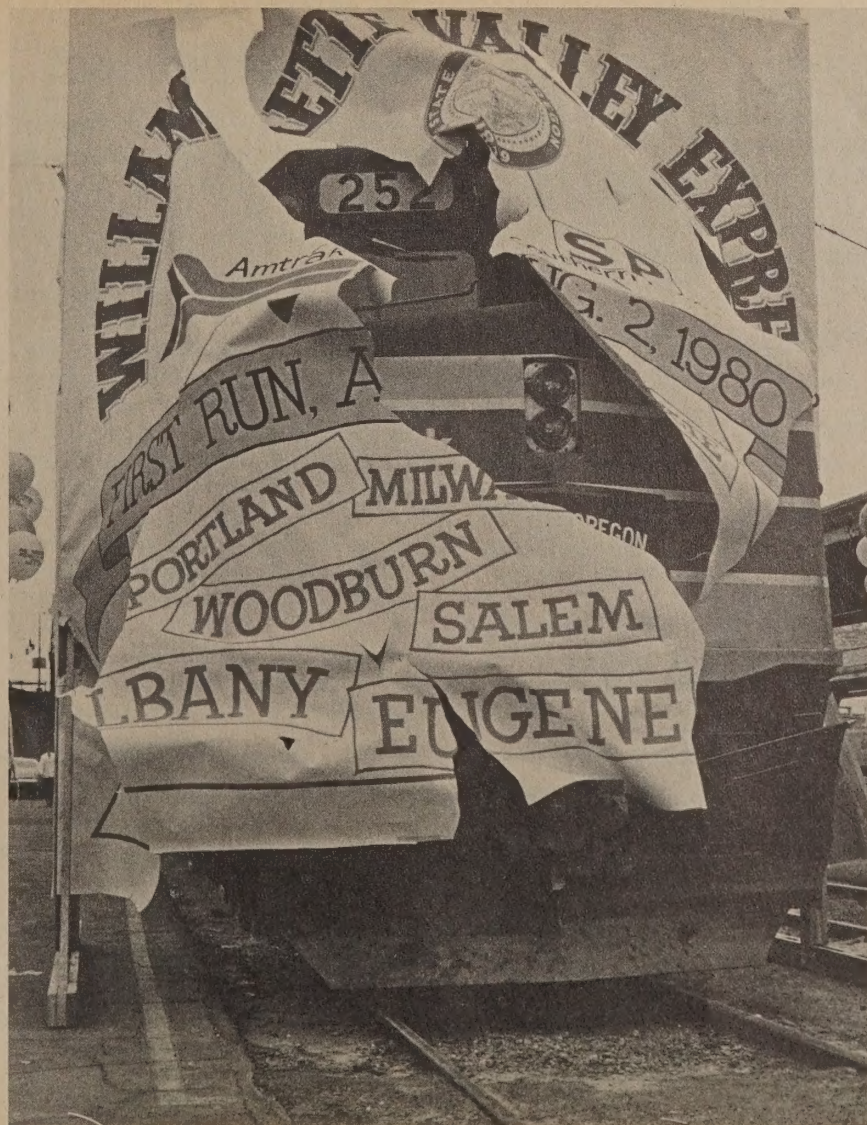
Rulien said a provision in the recently passed amendment to the

state constitution limiting the use of Highway Funds to highway activities "allows for this type of expenditure."

"We feel that the extra revenue produced by closer monitoring of highway and PUC permits should make up the additional \$500,000 of the transfer. We may even come out a little ahead," Rulien said.

He added that the troopers are being trained and should be working with the weighmasters by the end of September.

A smashing debut



BREAKING AWAY. Pre-inaugural run of Willamette Valley Express rolled out of Portland's Union Station Aug. 2. Expanded passenger service gained popularity as month went by. See stories on page 4.

Measure 4 would aid Highway Fund problems

State gas tax and truck weight/mile fee increases will be on the November general election ballot as Measure 4.

Referred to the November ballot by the 1979 Oregon Legislature, Measure 4 includes a two cent-per-gallon gas tax hike and weight/mile fee increases averaging 14 percent.

(See MEASURE 4, page 2)

Commission goes on road

As part of a continuing effort to bring the Oregon Transportation Commission closer to the communities it serves, the commission's September 16 meeting will be held in Newport.

Bob Gormsen, manager of the Commission Services Section, said the meeting "is another in a series designed to allow people outside Salem to see the workings of the commission." Recent commission sessions have been held in Eugene, Coos Bay, Astoria and Ontario.

The meeting will begin at 9 a.m. in the conference room of the Marine Sciences Center. A no-host dinner at the Agate Beach Hilton Hotel is scheduled for the evening of Sept. 15.

Inside



'Express' ridership grows ...page 4

Miller on energy 'problem' ...page 3

PROFILE: Kathy Straton ...page 8

Measure 4 on November ballot

(Continued from page 1)

Although two previous attempts to gain voter approval of gas tax and weight/mile fee increases have failed in recent elections, obser-

vers believe the current ballot measure may have a better chance because all revenue from its passage would go toward highway work. In approving Measure 1 ear-

lier this year, voters guaranteed that Highway Fund revenue would not be diverted to police, parks or travel information use.

A successful vote in November would add an additional \$34 million per year to the state Highway Fund. Twenty percent of that would be distributed to Oregon counties, and Oregon cities would receive another 12 percent. The remainder would be used for state programs eligible for highway funding.

Measure 4 also includes a two cent-per-gallon increase in aviation fuel taxes. If passed in November, the gas tax, aviation fuel tax and

weight/mile fee increases would take effect on January 1, 1981. Informational materials on Measure 4 are being prepared by ODOT's Intergovernmental and Public Affairs office and will be available for distribution after mid-September.



Director's Corner

FRED KLABOE



The Highway Division is showing a lot of versatility these days. As a result of having to relocate Multnomah County's Rocky Butte jail and public works buildings to make way for I-205, it will be the contractor on a new 16-story building in downtown Portland and a new public works facility in east Multnomah County. Both jobs are now underway.

The jail building is more than just a jail. Housed within the same building will be the Portland Police Department administrative offices, the county court system and a ground floor retail area. The total cost of this project will be about \$50 million. The project engineer is Bob Ellison of our Bridge Section.

Building a jail-police-court complex is a lot more complicated than an ordinary apartment or office building. There will be more than 400 separate cells for prisoners. Security, of course, adds a lot to the cost. There must be exercise areas, gyms, recreation areas, a kitchen, and dining rooms, etc. There will even be a firing range for the police department.

Financing the building is also complicated. By far the largest cost is for the jail and that is financed with interstate highway funds on a 92 percent federal-8 percent state ratio. The court facility is financed by the county and the police facility by the city.

Putting a project like this together has been a monumental task. I would like to extend a special thank you to Bruce Boyd, right of way manager, on whom the burden of putting this together fell, and to Tom Walsh, vice chairman of the Transportation Commission, who spent hundreds of hours of his valuable time helping us with the difficult negotiations between the county, city and federal folks.

When finished in a couple of years, it will be the most modern and most efficient justice center facility in the country. The Highway Division has always had a national reputation for building outstanding bridges, like the Fremont and the Glenn Jackson I-205 bridges. The new venture will, I am sure, add considerably to that reputation.

Earlier this month, the Willamette Valley Express began service between Eugene and Portland. Two trips each way per day were added to the schedule. For those employees who find the use of the train to travel convenient, vouchers are available by contacting any of the following:

Joann M. Plemons	Aeronautics Division	Phone 378-4880
Dale Conyers	Highway Division	Phone 378-6384
Mary Boyer	Motor Vehicles Division	Phone 378-6912
Mollymae Brown	DOT Central Services	Phone 378-6810
Maxine Newell	Public Transit Division	Phone 378-8201
Doug Vincent	Parks and Recreation Division	Phone 378-6379

All one has to do is fill out the voucher, have his/her supervisor approve it and hand it in to the ticket salesperson at the station or, if at an unmanned station, to the train conductor in exchange for a ticket. Below is the schedule for the Express.

Rehabilitation costs soar

Despite the skyrocketing cost of asphalt, the Highway Division's emphasis on rehabilitation of existing highways in recent years has increased considerably the number of miles repaved each year.

Highway officials said that asphalt prices have increased 120 percent during the past three years. At the same time, the

number of miles repaved have increased from 58 in 1978 to 198 in 1980.

Approximately \$26 million is budgeted in calendar year 1980 for repaving and minor improvements of 115 miles of highway. This compares with \$4 million budgeted in 1972 to repave approximately the same mileage.

YEAR	MILES PAVED	COST PER MILE
1970	93	\$ 42,000
1975	56	79,000
1978	58	148,000
1979	198	183,000
1980	115 (est.)	223,000 (through July)

Quintet passes in-training certification test

Five Highway Division employees have passed the examination for certification as engineers-in-training.

Passing the examination were Barbara B. Hopewell, Highway Engineer (HE) 1, project management section, Salem; Robert B. Kaspari, HE 1, field construction section, Portland; Kevin K. Nack, Engineering Trainee, field construction section, Portland; Tim H. Thex, HE 3, environmental section, Salem, and Glenn A. Knoper, HE 1, design section, Metro Branch.

The engineer-in-training examination is the first step toward certification as a professional engineer.

In addition Robert L. Dean, HE 1, design section, Salem, was granted registration as a land surveyor.

Via

Oregon Transportation Commission

Chairman
Anthony Yturri

Members
Peter J. Brix
B. Gordon Coleman
Michael P. Hollern
Tom Walsh

Director
Fred B. Klaboe

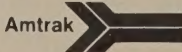
Published by:

The Office of Public Affairs
104 Transportation Building
Salem, Oregon 97310
Phone: 378-6546

George Bell
Assistant Director
for
Intergovernmental and
Public Affairs

Dave Davis
Managing Editor

Willamette Valley Express

NORTHBOUND						SOUTHBOUND			
		WILLAMETTE VALLEY EXPRESS	Mt. Rainier	Coast Starlight*			WILLAMETTE VALLEY EXPRESS	Mt. Rainier	Coast Starlight*
LEAVES EUGENE	6:25 a.m.	2:05 p.m.		10:54 a.m.	LEAVES SEATTLE			5:30 p.m.	11:50 a.m.
ARRIVES ALBANY	7:09	2:49		11:36	ARRIVES PORTLAND			9:20	3:50 p.m.
ARRIVES SALEM	7:44	3:24		12:14 p.m.	LEAVES PORTLAND	7:30 a.m.	6:00 p.m.		4:05
ARRIVES WOODBURN	8:07	3:47			ARRIVES MILWAUKIE	7:53	6:32		
ARRIVES MILWAUKIE	8:48	4:28			ARRIVES WOODBURN	8:32	7:11		
ARRIVES PORTLAND	9:20	5:00		2:05	ARRIVES SALEM	8:55	7:34		5:22
LEAVES PORTLAND			9:30 a.m.	2:20	ARRIVES ALBANY	9:28	8:07		5:50
ARRIVES SEATTLE			1:20 p.m.	6:20	ARRIVES EUGENE	10:25	9:00		6:41

*Reservations required

Clip and save

'Mini crises' possible

Miller cites energy 'problem'

The United States has an 'energy problem,' not an energy crisis, according to Fred Miller, ODOT assistant director for administration.

"Conservation vs. Consumption: The Growing Dilemma in Highway Funding," was the title of Miller's speech, delivered July 28 to the annual National Transportation Public Affairs Workshop held in Portland recently.

Miller said he dislikes the term energy crisis, because "too frequently it is used to describe a situation in which we will run out of energy resources."

"We have an energy problem...a matter of matching limited resources with demand at higher prices," he said. "That is more manageable than a crisis in which resources just aren't available."

Energy abundance?

Miller said a case can be made for an energy abundance because of our vast resources of petroleum, coal, oil shale and natural gas, coupled with opportunities for conservation and use of renewable resources such as hydropower, solar, and wood.

He was quick to add, however, that the United States may experience a series of "mini crises" over the next 20 years due to something going wrong with the networks supplying energy, and occasional gaps between energy demand and supply.

One of the major results of the current situation of shrinking gas usage and highway revenue, according to Miller, is public confusion about energy, and this makes it difficult to develop a coherent and widely supported energy policy.

"People aren't sure how serious the energy problem is, and seem to be looking for someone to blame -- the Arabs, the government, the big companies, or themselves," Miller said.

Still, despite the problems and confusion, Miller was optimistic

that solutions are available that will not seriously disrupt either the public's lifestyles or the future of the nation's transportation departments.

Among his reasons for optimism:

--Reduction of waste and inefficiency will ease the oil shortage;

--The public does recognize there is an energy problem;

--Highways and automobiles will play a key role in solving the problem, and

--There are options available for addressing the transportation financial difficulties.

Miller's ideas on future funding for transportation raised eyebrows at the workshop. They included restructuring the highway trust fund and a moving away from reliance on the simple cents-per-gallon gasoline tax.

"Creative financing" is essential for the future, he added. Increasing the gasoline tax by a cent or two periodically should only serve to buy time for more effective long-

term solution.

He cited as examples of other short-term responses: ODOT's advancement of the gas tax collection date to increase interest in-

Energy Watch

The following is the first of a series of articles concerning conservation within the Department of Transportation which will appear in VIA during the next several months.

Carl Nelson, ODOT Administrative Services Manager, is keeping an eye out for BTUs.

No, he is not looking for unidentified flying objects.

ABTU is a British thermal unit. In practical terms, it is a unit for measuring energy usage between various systems, such as natural gas, electricity and heating oil. One

come and the recent constitutional amendment that moved the State Police into the General Fund.

Long-term funding answers may come from an inflation-indexed gasoline tax. Transportation tax proposals may have to be accompanied by reduced tax burdens in other areas.

BTU equals the amount of heat needed to raise the temperature of one pound of water from 62 degrees Fahrenheit to 63 degrees (F).

Nelson is watching BTUs because Governor Atiyeh has directed all state agencies to reduce energy consumption in their buildings by 20 percent compared to 1976 levels.

Energy equals dollars

"We are well on our way to meeting that goal," Nelson said.

Since electricity and steam used in the Salem Transportation Building each cost approximately \$33,000 a year, any energy saved translates into dollars saved, as well.

Steps taken by Nelson to conserve energy have paid dividends in just the past year. Comparing figures from January-July, 1979, to the same period in 1980, energy use in the Transportation Building has been reduced by eight percent for electricity and 24 percent for the steam supplied for heating by the Capitol Mall boilers.

Comparing 1980 figures to those for the 1976 base year will be more difficult.

Before 1978, all electrical and heating costs for buildings on the Capitol Mall were combined. Individual buildings were then assessed, based on their square footage as a percentage of the total square footage of all Capitol Mall buildings. The Transportation Building, for example, was assessed 10.65 percent of the total energy bill.

ODOT overcharged

In 1978, meters were installed to monitor the Transportation Building's energy use. The meters showed that ODOT was being overcharged by approximately \$800 a month for electricity, according to Nelson.

The savings that ODOT has accomplished have come from methods such as removing lights in hallways and offices, reducing the wattage of remaining lights, and installing thermostats on the radiators and setting the temperature at 68 degrees (F) in the winter. It was the last action that accounted for much of the drop in steam usage over 1979, Nelson explained.

Future conservation measures may include covering the south and west-side windows with reflectorized material and the installation of water-flow constrictors on the building faucets.

"Most of the things we will be doing will be dependent on the individual employee conserving whenever possible," Nelson said.

"We will look at doing things that will be cost effective in the amount of energy saved versus the cost of doing the project," he added.

After 5 years...

Transitway plans approved

The Banfield Transitway cleared the final hurdle blocking construction August 7 when the U.S. Department of Transportation approved the project's final environmental impact statement.

The approval completed five years of preliminary design, development and citizen input, and cleared the way for final design and right-of-way acquisition to begin in mid-September.

Construction of the light rail/freeway system will be a cooperative effort between the Oregon Department of Transportation and Tri-Met, the Portland metropolitan area transit district. ODOT's Metro Branch will handle right-of-way acquisition, complete final design

and construct the freeway and 19.5 mile-long light-rail roadbed portion of the project.

Tri-Met will lay the track and construct the rail stations, purchase rolling stock, and design a bus system to serve the stations.

Robert Bothman, administrator of the Metro Branch, said the project "will become the backbone of the east-side transportation system in the metropolitan area."

"We have a transit project which recognizes the need for both highway and light rail and is designed to allow the land use plan for the area to materialize," he said.

Bothman said construction should begin in 1981, with completion set for 1985.

Rooster Rock day-use fee 'accepted'

Most people who use Rooster Rock State Park apparently don't mind paying \$1 to trade the sweltering heat of the city for the cooling waters of the Columbia River.

On August 9, the Parks Division began charging a \$1 day-use entrance fee to the park, located 20 miles east of Portland on the I-84 freeway. Park Manager Ken Lucas said the fee went into effect with little opposition.

"We were prepared for the worst, but I felt it went very well," he said.

Regional Parks Supervisor Frank Stiles said the day-use fee was imposed for two reasons. "We needed some way to offset the increased operational costs caused by the heavy use the park has been receiving. We also wanted to reduce the number of people coming into the park--there were simply far more people using the park than it was designed for."

"The traffic flow, especially around the boat ramp, was much better the first weekend the fee

was charged," Stiles said. Lucas added that for the first time in several weeks, "we didn't have to close the gates to car traffic--with the resulting traffic jam-up along the shoulders of the freeway."

The fee should bring in about \$16,000 through Sept. 28, the last day the fee will be in effect this summer.

"That isn't much," he commented, "especially when you realize that our contract for law enforcement services alone costs \$48,000 a year. But it will help offset some expenses."

'Cruisers' curtailed

Imposition of the fee has cut down troublesome faction "cruisers."

"We've had real problems with people who cruise the parks," said Stiles. They'll go from Rooster Rock, to Multnomah Falls, to the scenic highway parks, to Lewis and Clark and Dabney on the Sandy River. They've caused accidents, and scattered litter.

He added that park crews have noticed "less litter, and the sheriff's patrol has had an easier time of it," since the fee was established.

Rooster Rock is the first state park to charge a day-use fee. Stiles said one reason is because "we have some special circumstances here, mainly in the East Beach area."

The eastern portion of the park was officially designated a nude sunbathing and swimming beach last year. Stiles said the division felt "the rest of the state shouldn't have to pay the bill for this special situation. We're asking the people directly involved to offset the additional costs."

Reactions to the fee were generally mixed, according to Lucas. "We had some people who were opposed to the user-fee; however, we also had a surprisingly large number of people, particularly those who use the east beach, who wondered why we hadn't done it before."

Rail service report

'Express' ridership grows

Additional Amtrak service between Portland and Eugene boasted increasing ridership and "extremely favorable" comments from passengers during its first two weeks of operation, according to ODOT Special Projects Coordinator Jack Graham.

Graham said ridership averaged about 200 daily between August 3,

the start of regular service, and August 14. The highest one-day total came on August 13, when 301 boarded the train. One benchmark of success agreed to between Southern Pacific, ODOT and Amtrak is an average daily ridership of 345 after twelve months of service.

Mid-week ridership showed an erratic, but steadily upward trend, said Graham, indicating the train was being used primarily for one-day business and shopping trips rather than commuting.

Nearly every day during the first two weeks of service, Graham rode sections of the train or visited stations to sample passenger and crew reaction. With few exceptions, Graham said, the comments he received were extremely favorable, especially about the new Superliner equipment.

Hello?

The most criticism, he said, was directed at the difficulty in getting through to a human being on Amtrak's toll free numbers.

Graham said he is trying to get the word out in a variety of ways that no reservations are needed, although tickets can be purchased in advance.

Passengers should have ample time to buy tickets if they arrive fifteen to twenty minutes before the scheduled departure time, he said. Passengers boarding at Milwaukie and Woodburn purchase tickets from the conductor.

On August 5, just two days after the "Willamette Valley" made its first scheduled run, Graham appeared on a Portland radio call-in talk show to answer questions. Listeners were asked to let the station (KXL) know whether or not they favored using tax money to subsidize the train. Talk show host Larry Roberts said later that the question prompted large number of responses, every one of which was favorable.

Graham's immediate plans include a survey of riders and potential riders to see if schedule changes are needed. He is also investigating ways to either improve or work around the present poor telephone information service.

Graham said that even the crews are happy with the service, because the short runs allow them to return home nearly every day.

Program to reward suggestions

Saving the state of Oregon money could put dollars in the pockets of Department of Transportation employees through a new employee suggestion awards program. Called "Oregon Bankable Idea\$, " the program recently began accepting suggestions.

The Employee Suggestion Awards Board, recently appointed by Governor Atiyeh, will review the suggestions submitted. Ideas which are implemented and save a state agency money may qualify the employee for a percentage of the first year's savings. Ideas which do not produce cash savings but have other benefits, such as improving employee morale or increasing safety, may result in non-cash awards. Non-cash awards will include art objects, certificates, plaques and breakfast with the Governor.

ODOT has several suggestion coordinators who have complete instructions and forms available for the program. They are: ODOT Central Services, Dick Rumbolz and Shirley Ziebart, 378-6720; Highway Division, Jack Sullivan, 378-6385; Parks 9 recreation, Gene Fletcher, 378-2816; Public Transit Roselyn Kay, 378-8201; Motor Vehicles, Pete Nunnenkamp, 373-1575; Metropolitan Branch, Larry Macnab, 238-2226; Aeronautics, Roger Ritchey, 378-4880.

Completed forms should be submitted to Employee Suggestion Awards Board, Budget and Management Division, Executive Department, 155 Cottage St. N.E., Salem, OR 97310.

'Future office' in spotlight

The latest electronic office equipment will be featured during a series of presentations in September by ODOT's Office of the Future Committee.

Committee chairperson Jean Hardin said three programs of films, demonstrations and discussions have been prepared to help employees understand the trends in office automation. All presentations will be held in the Salem Transportation Building conference room.

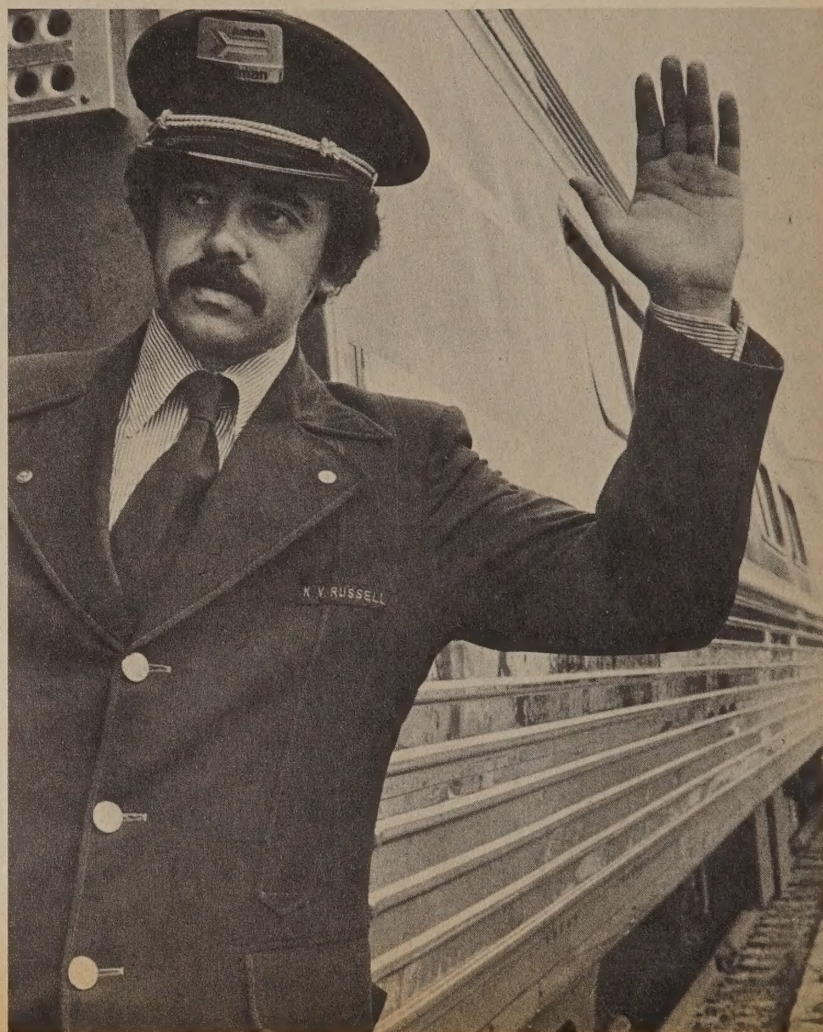
Hardin said the first presentation will be a set of films on new display-screen typewriters and laser copiers. Showings are scheduled at 8:30, 9:30 and 10:30 the mornings

of Tuesday, September 9 and Thursday, September 11.

The capabilities of ODOT's present word processing center is the subject of the second program. Office and supervisory employees wishing to learn how best to utilize the center's services can attend one of four sessions on Wednesday, September 17. The sessions will begin at 8:30 and 10, and 1 and 2:30 in the conference room.

A 'hands-on' demonstration of a word processor designed for individual office use is planned for Tuesday, September 23. Persons wishing to participate can schedule time on the machine by calling Jean Hardin at 378-6516.

All aboard the Willamette Valley Express



LET 'ER ROLL. Amtrak trainmen Ken Russell gave all-clear signal as pre-inaugural run of Willamette Valley Express left Portland Aug. 2.

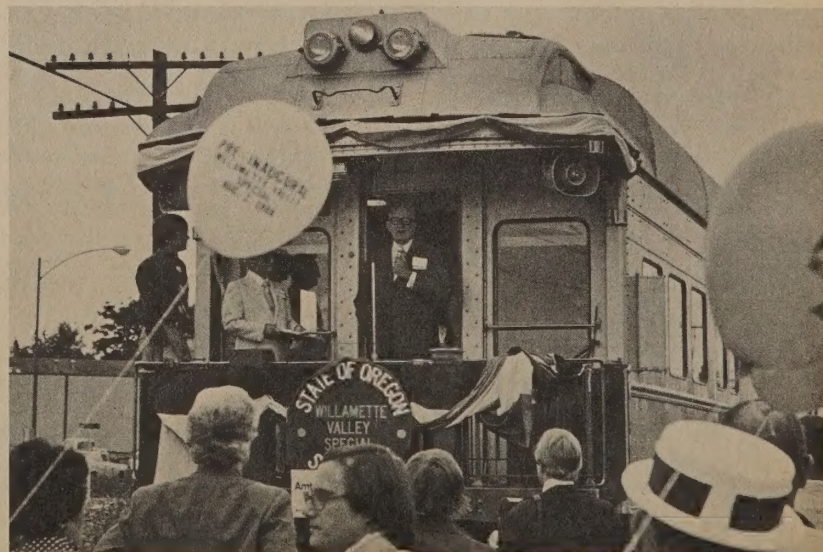
With the hoopla befitting a gala event, the pre-inaugural run of the the Willamette Valley Express whistle-stopped its way from Portland to Eugene on Aug. 2.

Among those riding the ceremonial train were Gov. Vic Atiyeh; Benjamin A. Biaggini, chairman of the board of the Southern Pacific Co.; Transportation Commission Chairman Anthony Yturri; ODOT Director Fred Klaboe; AMTRAK Vice Presidents Carole Foryst and Bob Herman, and the mayors of Portland, Milwaukie, Albany and Eugene.

The 18-month experiment is an attempt to get motorists, headed from one Willamette Valley destination to another, out of their cars and onto the train.



UNIMPRESSED. Speeches and ceremony failed to impress unidentified young engineer-to-be at East Milwaukie.



WHISTLE STOP. B. A. Biaggini, chairman of board of Southern Pacific Co., addressed crowd at Milwaukie.

Basque Station: A rough land, a hard life '... but it's right for us'



BASQUE STATION--"The only good, green shady spot in the whole country," according to Section Foreman Virgil Lewis.

(Continued from page 1)
promoted to his job. I like it here so much, I'll probably retire from here."

"We're all volunteers," he continued. "None of us were brought in against our will. We're here because we like the place."

For the city-bred, Lewis admits, life in Basque Station must seem austere. Amenities are few and far between. There is no telephone service; the station's only link with nearby communities is by two-way radio. McDermitt, Nev., the nearest city, is 30 miles to the south. Jordan Valley, the next-nearest, is 71 miles to the northeast.

"Yes, we're pretty much on our own here," says Art Cook, maintenance worker 2, "but that doesn't bother me. I like the quiet, and that's a pretty good trade-off." Cook, who married recently, says he brought his bride-to-be to the station "to see what it was like. I told her that this is where I work, and that I like it here. She was from Boise, but she fell in love with the place."

View always different

Jean Lewis, Virgil's wife, is another who came to Basque and fell in love with the surroundings.

"I just love this country," she says, looking out a window of her house at the rolling prairie. "You can drive down the same highway

100 times and it'll always be different. It's beautiful country.

"For someone with no kids (the nearest school is across the state line in Nevada), or whose kids are grown and out of the house, it's a nice place to live. Young people don't seem to stay here very long (the average age of the maintenance crew is nearly 46) because there isn't that much for entertainment. But this is the right place for us."

Virgil adds that living in Basque,



FREELoader. "Auntie" the antelope mooches cigarette from Lewis while grandchildren, on visit from Roseburg, watch. Antelope was brought to the compound after being struck by car.

"can be pretty cheap. The rent is right (crew members pay between \$39 and \$59 monthly rent for their state-owned quarters). Of course, it does take a lot of gasoline to get into town.

"We go into Jordan Valley once a month for groceries, and that's a 140-mile round trip. Once a week, the wives go into McDermitt to get their hair fixed, and that's a 60-mile round trip. But most of us have small cars, and we feel it's important to get out once and a while. I've always felt the trip back (to Basque) is worth it."

The station was built in 1940 to care for approximately 100 miles of the Idaho-Oregon-Nevada Highway (US95) and ORE78. It derived its name from nearby settlements of sheep herders who immigrated to the area from the Basque Provinces of Spain.

The flocks of sheep have dimin-

Jean Lewis: You can drive down the same highway 100 times and it'll always be different.

ished, and so has the ethnic identity.

"Most of the Basques have moved into the towns and gone into business," Lewis says. "I understand that in the early days of the maintenance station, most of the crews were Basque, but that's not the case anymore."

The land is rough and the life sometimes hard, Lewis admits, but the Highway Division has done what it can to make the station compound liveable.

A community television antenna was erected on the top of a nearby butte to improve television reception. A concrete swimming pool was also built, using division materials and the crew's labor.

"The pool's in pretty bad shape, though," reports Lewis. "Cracks have developed in the walls, and it leaks pretty bad. We're trying to save up some of our own money so we can bring in a sandblaster and patch the walls. Until then, it'll have to stay dry."

Despite the dry pool, and the blistering hot summers and bone-chilling winters, the crew of Basque Station is happy where it is. After all, it is one of the few places where you can have your own pet antelope.

"Antie" the antelope is a recent addition to the Basque Station fam-

ily. She was brought in three months ago after being struck by a car. Her injuries have healed, and now she spends her days mooching cigarettes, cookies, and an occasional pansy from the flower garden. She also helps the two dogs of the fenced-in compound greet visitors.

"We seem to be adding to our pet supply quite regularly," laughs Lewis. "The antelope came three months ago. One of the dogs wandered in about two months ago, and the kitten over there showed up two days ago. The dog and kitten were dumped, I think. They seem to know where to come for a free handout."

Having a home on the open range, and the opportunity of having an antelope playing around in your back yard obviously appeals to the crew of Basque Station. Watching them at work and listening to them talk, you get the feeling that these are the same type of men that could have been found along the Chisolm Trail in the heyday of the cattle drives, or building the

Union Pacific Railroad across the plains of Nebraska.

They're rugged individuals who prefer the quiet of the prairie to the bustle of city life. Dick Arnell, at 52 the oldest of the crew, says the solitude of the area was what



COFFEE BREAK. Lewis talks over shoulder grading job with maintenance men Dick Arnell, left, and Art Cook.

brought him to Basque Station, and then lets the quiet of the prairie speak for itself.

Working on a shoulder grading job along ORE78, Arnell pulls off the roadway and kills the engine of his Galion road grader. Reaching behind him, he pulls out a thermos and pours a cup of coffee.

The landscape is still, the silence broken only by an occasional gust of wind rustling through the sagebrush. An empty roadway stretches as far as he can see. Dust devils skitter across the prairie and a hawk circles lazily, looking for an unwary jackrabbit.

"That's it," Arnell smiles, listening. "That's why I like it here. As far as I'm concerned, I'll retire here. There's just no place like it."

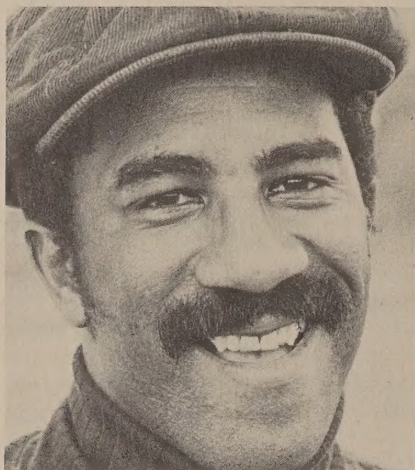
And for the Basque Station crew--Foreman Lewis, Assistant Foreman Leo Snider, and maintenance workers Cook, Arnell and Dennis Fretwell--this unique spot on the Oregon landscape is the only place they want to call home.



Jerry Robertson is VIA's inquiring photographer. He selects his own subjects. VIA's editors frame the question of the month. Answers are edited only for length.

CANDID COMMENTS

Is service in Motor Vehicles Division field offices improving?



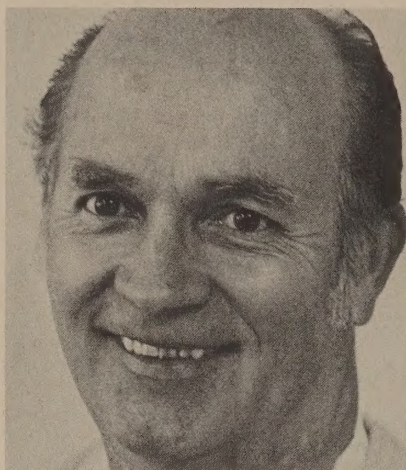
ED HINDERER, DMV
MVR 2, Tillamook

We don't have a terminal in our office but one thing that has helped is the Mod Squad (modular processing units) in Salem. It makes it easier to solve problems. We've revamped our office to make it more pleasant for the customer. And the toll-free numbers to Salem have helped us get through to headquarters faster.



MARILYN FREDERICKSON, DMV
Manager, Tualatin

Our waiting time has been cut to a 20-minute average, and that's a big improvement. I think service has definitely improved. The take-a-number system we have has helped, also.



WAYNE LANDERS, DMV
MVR 3, Gladstone

I think service is improving because our automatic testing machines are freeing up counter people to handle other business--we're handling more people with the same counter help. Our take-a-number system and computer terminal have been giant steps toward better service.



SUE HARRIS, DMV
MVR 1, The Dalles

I think it has improved, mainly because the information we been getting from Salem on how to handle certain transactions has improved. We also have specific telephone numbers we can call for help with problems, and that helps.



VIVIAN PERRY, DMV
Supervisor, NW/Central Regions

Overall, I'd say it has improved. We've had a lot of people out for training and vacations, so it may have suffered this summer, but the improved communications we have with Salem, the take-a-number system, and the 'mod-squad' approach to document processing have all improved our service in the field.



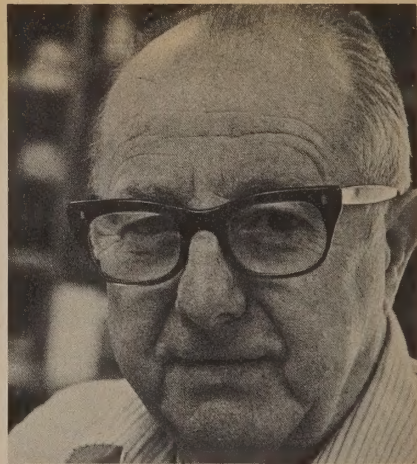
DICK SOMMERS, DMV
Manager, East Portland

Yes, I'd say service is improving. We now have the ability to reinstate drivers licenses directly through the computer, instead of having to call Salem first. We have better access to files in Salem today than we have ever had. I would say that the public gets more and better service today than every before.



ROSE MCCOY, DMV
Manager, Ashland

I feel it has improved to some extent. We still need more people in our field offices to cover when someone is sick, etc. Communications between the field office and headquarters is much better. Even though we're a small office here, I still have (telephone) lines that I can get through on when I have a problem.



ELGUS FRANK, DMV
Manager, Prineville

Yes, I think service is improving. There are two reasons: one, communications between the field offices and headquarters has improved, and two, training has improved. We have training now for everyone from counter people to managers.

RANDY CLARK, DMV
MVR 2, Medford

Some services have improved. Testing machines and computer terminals have cut down the time it takes to complete a transaction. The take-a-number system now allows customers to sit down and relax, but it still takes too long to get to the counter. The best way to improve DMV services would be to add employees.



RUTH HUFFMAN, DMV
Manager, Baker

I can only speak for this office, but we've always given good service. We've had a tremendous increase in the amount of paperwork required in all four phases of our operation, but we still give good service--we just work harder at it.

People Page

Moving up the ranks

CONGRATULATIONS!

The following employees received promotions recently:

Gerald Aasen, Engineering Technician (ET) 1 to ET 2, Portland.

John B. Allen, Park Ranger 1 to Ranger 2, Silver Falls State Park.

Donald C. Aman, Highway Engineer (HE) 2 to HE 3, Salem.

Glenn H. Chronister, Highway Maintenance Foreman (HMF) 1, Brothers, to Highway Maintenance Supervisor (HMS) B, Moro.

Herbert Cox, Highway Maintenance Worker (HMW) 2 to HMW 3, Albany.

Billy G. Fullen, HMW 3, Corvallis, to HMS 1, Waldport.

Joseph C. Giegerich, Park Ranger 1 to Ranger 2, Silver Falls State Park.

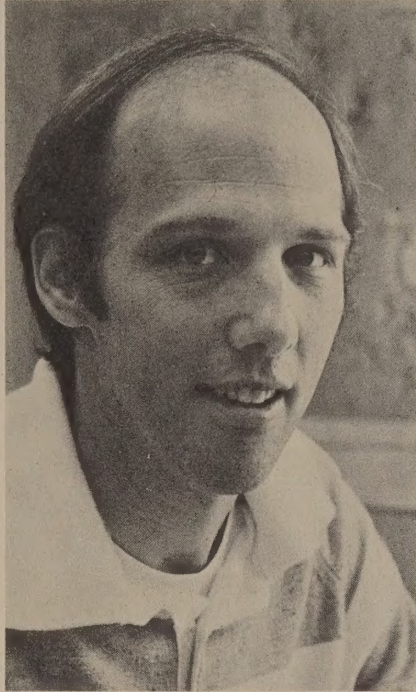
Kenneth D. Fickel, ET 1 to ET 2, Hermiston.

Sheryl A. King, Engineering Aide (EA) to ET 1, Portland.

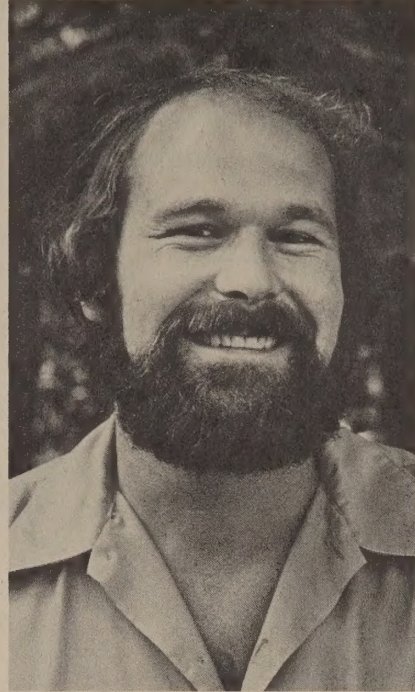
Richard Krog, HMW 3 to HMW 4, Corvallis.

Clairel E. Lollar, HMF 1, Grants Pass, to HMS C, Central Point.

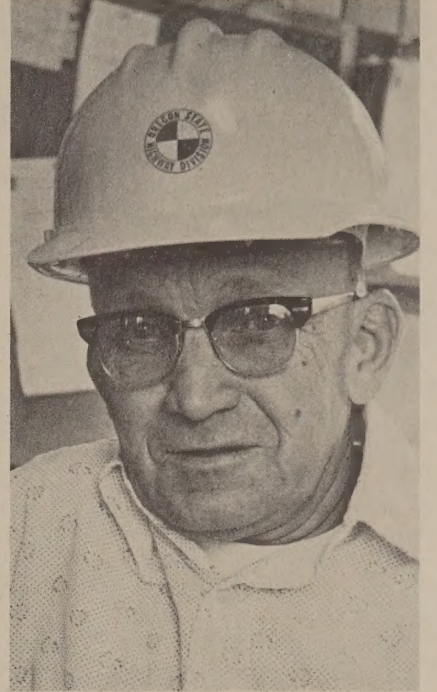
Fred N. Lucht, Supervising Highway Engineer (SHE) A, Corvallis, to SHE B, Salem.



Don Aman



Joe Giegerich



Herbert Cox

Gary J. Methvin, Park Aide (PA), Memaloose State Park, to Park Ranger 1, Emigrant Springs State Park.

Daniel L. McDonald, HMW 3 to HMS 1, Brothers.

Fredrick A. Sawyer, ET 2, Milwaukie, to HE 1, Portland.

Robert L. Stevens, HE 1, Portland,

to HE 2, Milwaukie.

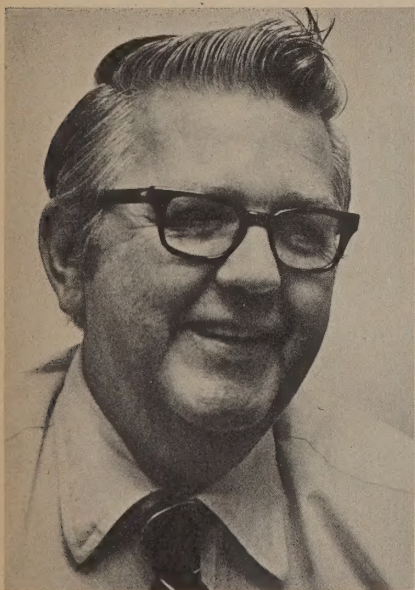
Tommy J. Swisher, HMF 1 to HMS C, Burns.

Glenn Wood, Bridge Paint In-

spector to Painter Foreman, Astoria.

Roberta Young, Research Analyst 3 to Planner 2, Salem.

Elliott named Parks PIO



John Elliott, former managing editor of the Klamath Falls Herald and News, has been appointed Public Information Officer for the Parks and Recreation Division.

Elliott, 40, fills a vacancy created three months ago by the promotion of Kathy Straton to State Recreation Director.

The North Dakota native spent five-and-a-half years on the staff of the Herald and News before leaving the paper in 1979. He also has worked on newspapers in Minot, N.D., and Santa Cruz, Calif.

Elliott has been self-employed and helped establish a training project for a Klamath Falls manpower consortium before being appointed to the Parks PIO position.

Pair awarded FHWA grants

The Federal Highway has awarded grants-in-aid to two Highway Division employees to further their education in job-related subjects.

Robert Oakes, a Highway Engineer 2 in the Salem Project Management Branch, and Charles P. James, an HE 1 in the Metro Branch location crew, will receive money for tuition and books.

The FHWA program is designed to help working highway engineers further their education in areas in which they work. Dick Rumbolz, manager of ODOT's Employee Development Section, said the awards "are contingent on their coming back to work for the department after completing their course of study".

"Between 60 and 70 grants are awarded every year," said Rumbolz. "Subjects don't have to be related to highway engineering. They could be in the areas of safety, for example, or environmental. We've even had a grant awarded for an engineer to study bicycle paths."

The awards were for the 1980-81 academic year.

Safe crews earn certificates

Seven Highway Division crews have earned State Accident Insurance Fund (SAIF) or ODOT Excellence Awards for working continuous man-hours without time loss injuries.

They are:

Crew 080-16, Albany Engineering Crew; 150,000 man-hours; Keats Oliver, supervisor.

Crew 080-45, Salem Engineering Crew; 50,000 man-hours; Cliff Lehman, supervisor.

Crew 104-01, La Grande Shop

Crew; 150,000 man-hours; Carl Goldsby, supervisor.

Crew 111-40, Salem Sign Crew; 12 years; Donald Tummons, supervisor.

Crew 113-02, Estacada Maintenance Crew; 80,300 man-hours; Donald C. Dodd, Supervisor.

Crew 122-01, Salem Maintenance Crew; 100,000 man-hours; Richard Moffitt, supervisor.

Crew 153-07, Elgin Maintenance Crew; 200,000 man-hours; Melvin Woods, supervisor.

We'll always remember...

VIA regrets to announce the deaths of the following ODOT employees:

Donna Lorraine Weid, 30, an employee of the Parks Division for four years, died of a heart seizure at her home in Redmond on July 28.

Ms. Weid was born in Albany and had been an Oregon resident all her life. She was hired by the Parks Division in November of 1975 as a clerical specialist, and moved up the ranks to parks recreation technician. She had been working on a project in Redmond at the time of her death.

Harold V. Melchert, 71, who spent 33-1/2 years with the Highway Division before his retirement in 1973, died August 4 in a Salem hospital.

Born in Larned, Kan., Mr. Melchert was graduated from McPherson College in Kansas. He began his career with the Highway Division in 1940 as a blue printer and was a senior engineering technician when he retired.

Cecil Ash, 70, who retired from the Motor Vehicles Division's Coos Bay office in 1975, died June 20 in Coos Bay.

Ash began his career with DMV in 1956 as a driver license examin-

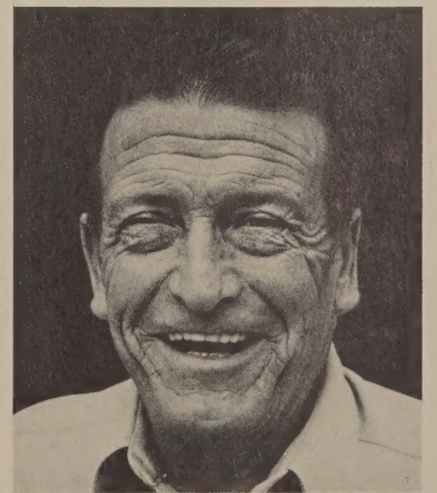
er. He was reclassified to a Motor Vehicle Representative 1 in 1960, and was promoted to MVR 2 in 1970. He held that position until his retirement.

Roy C. (Jack) Vaughn, 87, a maintenance foreman in the Redmond area until he retired in 1958, died August 12 in Redmond.

Vaughn was born in Buffalo Center, Iowa, and moved to Oregon in 1925.

He began his career with the Highway Division shortly after moving to Oregon and worked in the Redmond and Madras maintenance stations.

Retirements



Charles Burch

The following Department of Transportation employees retired recently:

Lloyd E. Hein, Park Ranger 2, Umpqua Lighthouse; 11 years.

Charles W. Burch, Highway Maintenance Supervisor 2, Waldport; 23 years.

Bethel B. Biggs, Highway Maintenance Worker 3, Coquille; 21 years.

On the job with Kathy Straton

The winding path from 'kind of a hippie' to 'madam director'

by George Bell

Kathy Straton is a feminist who has no complaints about working and competing in what she feels is still a "man's world."

Small wonder. At 33, she's just been promoted to State Recreation Director, making her the highest-paid and highest-ranking woman on the Parks Division staff.

Not bad for a woman who in high school thought that "getting married" would solve everything, and who was "kind of a hippie" during the 1970s at the University of Oregon.

Success a family affair

Given some knowledge of her family background, Kathy Straton's growth was probably predictable. Genes don't lie.

Parks Quarterly "...was the first step in developing a public constituency for Parks."

Her maternal grandfather was a Massachusetts textile manufacturer who started an unheard of hot lunch program for his employees during the "sweat shop" era. Her mother helped found one of the first credit unions for low income people, and worked successfully to establish rights under the state welfare system for mothers with dependent children.

Her paternal grandfather was a fundamentalist minister in New York City, and her father attended theological seminary to prepare for the same calling. But when he was exposed to the "values of other religions" during college, he turned liberal and became a Congregationalist.

With his doctor of divinity degree in hand, Reverend Straton moved his family west, first to Ohio, then Colorado, and finally, when Kathy was 12, to Eugene, where he joined the faculty of the University of Oregon in the Religious Studies Department.

Young Straton finished junior high and high school in Eugene, and then spent a year and a half at Pacific University in Forest Grove



"I'm sympathetic toward improving working conditions for women, but I get irritated by those who blame all women's ills on men."

because "it seemed important to go to a small school."

In the spring of 1967, she switched to the University of Oregon as a sociology major. "I was concerned about the welfare of the poor and down-and-out," she says, "and I

really got into social issues."

She remembers she never went to a single football or basketball game on campus. "All my friends had strong convictions about society's ills, and I got caught up in it."

Those feelings led to a job with the State Welfare Department when she completed her degree in 1969. She was assigned to Pendleton. "I feel like I grew up there," she says, "because it was my first full-time job. I paid off my student loans and bought my first car, a 1969 Buick (which she still drives)."

But the job didn't really fit, and her values began to change.

Part of her was duties providing liaison between Welfare and severely mentally retarded patients at Eastern Oregon State Hospital.

Career plans change

"I had nightmares after my first visit to the wards," she remembers. "I was terrified. I couldn't believe people like that were alive. And I couldn't see how I was doing anything to help them."

Straton stuck it out for two years, then decided to return to the University of Oregon in 1972 to

pursue a developing new interest—therapeutic recreation. "I had seen people with time on their hands and nothing to do," she says, "and I thought I might be more useful in society as a recreation specialist."

During her graduate studies, Straton went on a field trip to Wendling, an old logging town in the Mohawk Valley, to study the community from the "human perspective" rather than the natural resource point of view. As she wrote her research paper, she found herself getting "hooked" on history.

She received her M.S. degree in Park and Recreation Administration in the summer of 1974, but confesses she "didn't know what to do with it." Then she saw a newspaper job announcement for a park histo-

"I tried to talk about issues people would want to know about."

rian. Her fundamentalist grandfather might have called it heaven-sent.

She spent the next four months "badgering" Paul Hartwig, then head of Park's Historic Preservation Section. "I was rejected because I really didn't have the qualifications," she says, "but that was what I really wanted to do. I chose that job, and I went after it."

Her persistence paid off. In December 1974, Hartwig finally hired her as a student intern, under a program sponsored by Oregon State University. A few months later, with her foot in the door,

Straton was employed full-time as an interpretive specialist, under the Employment Stimulation Program initiated by then-Governor Bob Straub. "I've been in Parks ever since," she says.

Promotions follow

In Parks, true, but not standing still. After two and a half years working with natural and historic preservation projects, she interviewed in January 1978 for the new position of Parks Information Representative—and got it.

One big factor in her favor was that she had just written a book called, *Oregon's Beaches: A Birth-right Preserved*. The book, published by the State Printer, under auspices of the Parks and Recreation Branch, is a narrative description of the public's historic use of Oregon's beaches, and the storm of controversy that surrounded passage of the famous Beach Bill during the 1967 Legislature. Some 400 copies have been sold so far at \$2 each.

Straton "loved" her new job, being the spokeswoman for Parks. "It was great working for Dave (Talbot), and getting a chance to observe the political process in the legislature. I felt privileged to be trusted to be part of management."

Starts popular publication

In 1978, she initiated the *"Parks Quarterly."* "It was the first step," she says, "in developing a public constituency for Parks, by making people outside the agency aware of what was going on in Parks."

Straton chose the subjects she

wrote about with great care. "I tried to talk about issues that people would want to know about," she says. The formula has been successful: After each of the seven issues, Parks received more than 40 requests from the public to be added to the mailing list.

In May of this year, despite a "terrible interview," Straton was hired as State Recreation Director. In that job, she will administer in "pass-through" grants to local government, assisting cities and counties develop recreational programs and facilities.

Her achievements have tempered her view of the women's movement. "I'm sympathetic toward improving working conditions for women," she says, "but I get irritated by those who blame all women's ills on men. It's not men's fault that women are not where they could be. Women just have to work harder."

Committed to career

Straton, for one, is willing to do that. "I'll be a career person all my life," she says. "I'll stay in the natural resources field, but I think change is good, and I like popping from one job to another."

She even has her sights set on her next job, "in three to five years": the Governor's administrative assistant for natural resources.

No, sir. The genes don't lie.

Retirees let us know what's happening

Gardening limited

ALBERT (AL) E. JOHNSON, 1865 Brookside Avenue, West Salem, 97304. Retired 1975.

Al says that he and Mary have been two very busy people, what with all of their traveling, and helping to take care of a community garden to help fight the high price of food. Al reports that they recently completed a trip with the Salem senior citizens group to Death Valley, Las Vegas and Reno. A three-week stay in Hawaii was also

another interesting trip. Right now he is getting ready to take off for California to help celebrate his aunt's 103rd birthday.

Al says he no longer has his green house, so his days of propagating camellias is over, although he still has some beautiful plants in the yard.

He says he enjoyed a visit to the Glenn L. Jackson Bridge, a bridge he helped design, and is looking forward to the day when he can drive across it.

Al spent more than 42 years with the Highway Division, retiring as deputy state highway engineer.

Plays on 'their' money

B. J. (Jack) Spencer, 2255 Springbrook Road, Medford 97501. Retired 1978.

Jack says he's been keeping busy raising a garden and visiting Reno, Nev. He's been winning in the garden and "just about breaking even" in Reno. "I've mostly been playing with their (the casinos') money," he reports.

Jack was supervisor of the Motor Vehicles Division's southwestern region before his retirement.